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COTTON FINDS NEW USES

Broadcast by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. James B. Hasselman, Surplus Marketing Administration, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, Tuesday, April 8, 1941, by the National Broadcasting Company and associated Blue Network stations.

--ooOoo--

DON FISHER, ANNOUNCER:

Here we are in Washington. And to represent the Department of Agriculture, here is Ruth Van Deman, your regular Tuesday reporter on home economics. And with her James B. Hasselman of the Surplus Marketing Administration.

They tell me cotton is the subject uppermost on their minds today... new and better uses of cotton to help move some of the millions of bales of cotton in surplus.

And now, Miss Van Deman, I'm turning the microphone over to you.....

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

Just a second, Don Fisher, I have a question to ask you. Have you ever walked through a house made of cotton?

DON FISHER:

Have I ever walked through a house made of cotton?.....Have I ever seen a ship walking? You're spoofing me, Miss Van Deman.

JAMES B. HASSELMAN:

No, Fisher; she's not spoofing you. If you go down to the patio in the Department of Agriculture Building you can walk through a five-room house with the walls, floor, ceiling, covered with cotton and insulated with fireproofed cotton. It's a prefabricated house, very quick and easy to put up.

FISHER:

What holds the cotton in place?

HASSELMAN:

The cotton cloth is pressed onto thin sheets of plywood and held there with some kind of hot resin treatment. The space between these two cotton-covered walls...inside and outside, is filled with the fireproof cotton insulation. The engineers say the house can stand the wind and weather in the tropics or in arctic regions.

VAN DEMAN:

And the cotton-covered walls, inside as well as outside, are painted. The rooms in this exhibition house are soft green, light blue, pale yellow... A perfect background for the furniture and draperies. Of course the chairs

(over)

have cotton upholstery. And there are cotton curtains at every window and a closet filled with cotton sheets, bath towels, and soft absorbent cotton hand towels.

FISHER:

I get it. Cotton wherever you look...I'll certainly have to go down to the Agriculture Department and see this cotton house and all that's in it.

HASSELMAN:

You'll see a lot of other uses for cotton on exhibition in the patio down there too...ways in which the Department is cooperating with industry to find more outlets for cotton. You'll see cotton canvas for road building... cotton in highgrade writing paper...cotton cloth shades to protect tobacco plants and tree seedlings in the forest nurseries...cotton fabric in airport runways.

VAN DEMAN:

And more cotton mattresses than you ever saw before...thick, soft mattresses that low-income families have made for themselves...mattresses they couldn't possibly have raised the money to buy; and more comfortable than they ever dreamed they'd be able to rest their weary bones on night after night.

HASSELMAN:

To tell the truth, many of them never had a mattress of any kind before...Yes, the cotton mattress program is one of the ways of using surplus cotton that the Department feels proudest of. It's helped to build the morale of thousands of low-income farm families all over the country.

Since July 1, the Department has bought more than 300,000 bales of raw cotton for this mattress program.

VAN DEMAN:

And the blue-and-white ticking to hold the layers of cotton stuffing in place.

HASSELMAN:

Right. Nobody can make a mattress without ticking for the cover. Of course all the ticking we bought was 100 percent cotton.

VAN DEMAN:

Quite a help to cotton mills, I imagine...But even so, the 300,000 bales for mattresses for needy families have hardly made a dent in the national cotton surplus, have they?

HASSELMAN:

Only a bite, that's all. With the war complicating the export situation as it is, the cotton carry-over by August first will probably be more than 12 1/2 million bales in addition to the 1941 crop. At least that's the estimate now.

VAN DEMAN:

But we are using more cotton here at home than we did awhile back.

HASSELMAN:

Yes, with the general business pick-up, higher pay rolls, defense demands...our domestic use of cotton is getting quite a boost. We'll probably use more than 9 million bales in the United States this year.... But it looks now as though our exports wouldn't use more than about a million bales.

VAN DEMAN:

So any way you figure it, we have more cotton than we know what to do with.

HASSELMAN:

Yes, lady, that's the situation in a nut shell.

VAN DEMAN:

You said the mattress program was one bite into the surplus. Would you call the cotton stamp plan another?

HASSELMAN:

Yes, the cotton stamp plan is operating in 20 cities now. It's helping low-income families....families receiving public aid...to double their buying of cotton goods. For every dollar's worth of cotton goods they buy normally, they can get free stamps to buy just that much more cotton goods.

VAN DEMAN:

That's helping thousands of people to get clothes they need.... shirts, overalls, dresses, children's clothes,...and sheets, towels, other cotton things to use around the house.

HASSELMAN:

No question of it. And that, of course, widens the cotton farmer's market. Then there's another program to help the people who grow cotton, get more cotton goods to use. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration is arranging for them to get 25 million dollars' worth of our stamps to exchange for surplus cotton goods in the store next summer and fall. Those stamps will go to the farm families who voluntarily reduce their cotton acreage below allotments...and so help to hold down the surplus.

But, Miss Van Deman, you've let me talk along here about our plans to help on the cotton surplus. I haven't let you get a word in edgewise about these handsome cotton campus socks here on the table.

VAN DEMAN:

I'm glad to hear you call them handsome.

HASSELMAN:

They have a gloss like silk.

VAN DEMAN:

They're every thread cotton...long-staple cotton... grown at the Government field station at Sacaton, Arizona. Mercerizing gives that luster.

HASSELMAN:

It won't come off in the wash then.

VAN DEMAN:

Never. The yarns were mercerized before the hose were knit. Mercerizing is a permanent finish.

These campus socks for school girls are chapter two in our hosiery research...research to do its bit in using American-grown cotton.

HASSELMAN:

School girls would certainly go for these colors.

VAN DEMAN:

And the names of the colors--palm tree green, Havana coral, California sun.

HASSELMAN:

You say these are chapter two in your cotton hosiery research?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, chapter one is on women's cotton hose. Miss O'Brien's division has released to the trade over 100 designs for women's full-fashioned stockings. That's as far as we can go.

HASSELMAN:

Certainly. It's up to commercial firms then to manufacture them to meet the demand. Several of your designs for women's hose are in production, I understand.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, we know of three manufacturers who are making them. And our research has laid the ground work so that in an emergency the machines now knitting silk could quickly change over to fine cotton.

FISHER:

Miss Van Deman, do I see one lone man's sock here in this lay out?

VAN DEMAN:

You do. That's the beginning on chapter three on better-fitting better-looking cotton hose.

FISHER:

Then the men are not forgotten.

VAN DEMAN:

Never.

HASSELMAN:

They might even do more for the cause of cotton hose than women.

VAN DEMAN:

Now that's what I call being broadminded.

FISHER:

And will the Bureau of Home Economics be broadminded and send information about its research in cotton hosiery to any of our Farm and Home friends who may be interested?

VAN DEMAN:

With pleasure.

FISHER:

Thank you, Miss Van Deman and Mr. Hasselman. . . . And I'm surely coming down to the Department of Agriculture to see that cotton house and whole layout on cotton.

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